

Final Notes September 2, 1998

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEETING NOTES

August 6, 1998, 9:00 a.m.-4 p.m.

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE OFFICES PORTLAND, OREGON

I. Greetings and Introductions.

The August 6, 1998 meeting of the Implementation Team, held at the National Marine Fisheries Service's offices in Portland, Oregon, was chaired by Brian Brown of NMFS and facilitated by Donna Silverberg. The agenda for the August 6 meeting and a list of attendees are attached as Enclosures A and B.

The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, together with actions taken on those items. Please note that some enclosures referenced in the body of the text may be too lengthy to attach; all enclosures referenced are available upon request from NMFS's Kathy Ceballos at 503/230-5420 or via email at kathy.cebалlos@noaa.gov.

I. Introductions and Review of Agenda.

Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting, led a round of introductions and a review of the agenda.

II. Updates.

a. In-Season Management. TMT chairwoman Cindy Henriksen said that, as she reported at the last IT meeting, the spring seasonal flow objectives were exceeded at both Lower Granite and McNary in 1998. Based on this week's spreadsheet, she said, it appears that it will also be possible to exceed the summer seasonal flow objective at Lower Granite on a seasonal average basis; this exceedance includes Dworshak drafting to elevation 1520 feet by August 31. Henriksen added that the Idaho Power Company has already completed delivery of its 237 KAF of storage, and has shaped the additional 139 KAF of Upper Snake salmon flow augmentation water.

Henriksen said the 1998 Libby/Arrow swap agreement has been signed, and is already being accounted for. Because of hydrologic conditions in Canada, it appears that the volume of the 1998 swap will only be 120-130 Ksf, rather than 200 Ksf as was originally hoped. As a result, it now appears that Libby will draft to elevation 2445-2446 feet by August 31, rather than 2448 feet as was initially thought. She added that Hungry Horse is also continuing to draft, and will be at elevation 3540 feet by August 31; Reclamation was able to surcharge Hungry Horse by seven-tenths of a foot in 1998. Grand Coulee also filled at the beginning of the summer period, Henriksen said; that project will be evacuated to elevation 1280 feet, or to some other elevation agreed to by the states and tribes. Given these operations, the summer seasonal average flow at

McNary is expected to be about 177 Kcfs, she said.

Various Technical Management Team participants, including Silverberg, expressed appreciation for the quality and timeliness of the spreadsheet and other information that is now being provided by the Corps in support of each week's TMT meeting. Having quality information in hand, in a timely manner, has really helped the group to come to resolution on most issues at the weekly TMT meeting, and to avoid having to elevate issues to IT, Silverberg said.

b. Plan for Analyzing and Testing Hypotheses (PATH). This update was presented under Agenda Item III.

c. Integrated Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB). No ISAB report was presented at today's meeting.

d. Dissolved Gas Team (DGT). NMFS' Mark Schneider touched on recent activities of the Dissolved Gas Team; he distributed Enclosure C, a document outlining the current tasks and upcoming meetings of the DGT and the Transboundary Gas Group (please see this document for details for Schneider's presentation). Schneider noted that the Bureau of Reclamation will be releasing its appraisal-level report (ALR) on Grand Coulee gas abatement alternatives in October, and that this report, which will focus on structural, rather than operational, alternatives, will be presented at the SCT's October 21 meeting. Technical review of the report will take place the next day, at a meeting between representatives of the DGT and other interested entities. The Dissolved Gas Team will be meeting on August 14 to begin discussion of two research concepts approved by the IT: dissolved gas effects on adults, and impacts of physical injury due to DGAS structures and operations. These tasks are expected to be completed by October.

Schneider added that the second meeting of the dissolved gas management subgroup of the Transboundary Gas Group is set for August 13 in Portland. The purpose of this meeting is to develop a scope and schedule for a study plan; at the request of Doug Arndt, Schneider said he will provide an update on the group's progress at the September IT meeting.

e. System Configuration Team (SCT). Bill Hevlin of NMFS said the next SCT meeting is scheduled for August 14; the main task at this meeting will be to continue to rank and prioritize the items in the FY'99 Columbia River Fish Mitigation budget, in anticipation that the Congressional appropriation will be less than the \$117 million requested. Jim Ruff of the Power Planning Council staff added that, although Congress is now in recess until September, the word from Congressional staffers working on the Conference Committee is that the amount appropriated for FY'99 is likely to be somewhere in the \$40 million-\$50 million range. That is not carved in stone at this point, however, Ruff said; yesterday I received a copy of a letter, signed by every member of the Northwest Congressional delegation, to the chairman of the House side of the committee, supporting a \$95 million CRFM budget in FY'99. We'll just have to wait and see what Congress gives us, said Ruff; in the meantime, we'll continue on through the prioritization process.

Ruff added that, after reviewing the materials sent out in advance of next week's Systemwide Gas Group meeting, several of the federal agencies involved have said that the Transboundary Group effort needs to be sanctioned and endorsed at the policy level. I'm not sure what that

means, he said, but I think the IT needs to discuss that, because it was the IT that charged the SCT with this effort. If some of the agencies are now waffling, in terms of their participation, then you need to know about it, Ruff said.

Are you talking about participation in developing a scope for this effort, or participation in the subsequent systemwide decision-making process? Arndt asked. I don't know, Ruff replied – all I know is that I've been reading E-mail messages from participants from certain agencies, saying that they feel they need endorsement from a higher level and/or commitments of funding if they're going to continue to be involved.

Would an endorsement from the IT help allay some of the concerns you've heard? Silverberg asked. I think it would need to be higher than IT, Ruff replied. I guess my concern is that I think there has been some confusion about the activities of the transboundary group within the context of the basinwide effort that we, the IT, directed the SCT and DGT to pursue, said Arndt – I think some clarification is needed, and that's one of the reasons I'd like to see some sort of document from the transboundary group laying out the scope and schedule of their efforts.

In response to a question from Brown, Ruff said the main agenda item at next week's Transboundary Group meeting is the development of just such a scoping document. We will also be looking at the membership of all of the various transboundary subgroups – systemwide dissolved gas management, modeling, monitoring, structural and operational abatement, biological effects and research, and sharing information – to ensure that we have all of the right people involved, he said. In response to another question, Ruff said he will provide an update on the Transboundary Group's activities at the September SCT meeting, including a progress report on the development of the study plan. Whether the actual study plan will be finished by then, however, I can't say at this point, he said. In response to a question from Brown, Arndt said the Corps is more than willing to continue their involvement in the development of the study plan.

On a positive note, said Ruff, the Canadian participants are very enthusiastic about this effort – they have told us that they are committed to reducing dissolved gas at their projects, that they are developing monitoring and abatement plans, and overall, the timing of this effort couldn't have been better.

III. PATH Presentation -- Update on Revised Spring/Summer Chinook Results, Current PATH Status and Schedule.

PATH coordinator Dave Marmorek provided a lengthy update on recent PATH activities and schedule; this presentation is summarized in Enclosure F. He began his talk by saying that, in the process of doing the sensitivity analysis for the weight-of-evidence approach, PATH had found some mistakes in its preliminary spring/summer chinook report, and had made some revisions to the assumptions that were used in the preliminary analyses. The bottom line is that we have re-run the model, and continued our sensitivity analyses, Marmorek said; the results changed fairly significantly, so we thought it was important to correct our preliminary report. He added that other hypotheses have been received which may change the conclusions further.

From a functional standpoint, at what point do you stop accepting new hypotheses so that you can finish the analyses and make conclusions? asked Ed Bowles. June 6, 1998 was the closing

date, Marmorek replied. By that date, we had received outlines of hypotheses related to hatcheries, alternative ways of looking at drawdown, and multiple-factor hypotheses. Basically, people met the deadline, said Marmorek, and we're not accepting any additional input on this front.

The weight-of-evidence approach development process is going very well, Marmorek said; we have put together a first draft of our report, and are in the process of developing a second draft, and making good headway.

Marmorek spent a few minutes going through the changes in PATH's Preliminary Decision Analysis Report for Spring/Summer Chinook; please see Enclosure F for details of his presentation.

When do you expect to distribute the second draft of your weight-of-evidence report, and will that be your final draft? Arndt asked. No, it won't be the final, Marmorek replied. It will be reviewed by the Scientific Review Panel during their workshop in mid-September, but it won't be distributed to the region as a whole at that point – it will still be internal to PATH. It will be distributed more broadly after the weight-of-evidence panel has met.

Can you provide any information, at this point, as to which alternative provides the highest degree of robustness to modeling uncertainties? Bowles asked. All we can say at this point is that the results in Figure E-2 on Page viii (of Enclosure F) show the proportion of runs meeting all of the jeopardy standards under each of those actions, Marmorek replied. However, we have not yet weighted those alternative models, or any of the hypotheses. All we can say from this figure is that, from an unweighted point of view, Action A3 (drawdown to natural river level of the four Lower Snake River dams) comes out better under both modeling systems. It is premature to reach a strong conclusion about which action or alternative is the front-runner at this point, Marmorek said; however, with these caveats, this figure does summarize where we are in our analysis, currently.

But am I wrong in concluding that, given where you are, currently, in your analysis, that the drawdown alternative is the most risk-averse, and robust to those uncertainties, between the two hypotheses, at this point? Bowles asked. I know that's what you want me to say, Marmorek replied, but Figure E-2 says what I said – under either model, and the assumptions that have been run so far, Alternative A3 has a higher probability of meeting all of the jeopardy standards. That's where we are right now, said Marmorek, but there is still a lot of evidence that needs to be plugged in. I think it's important, in that we have a little less to argue about than we had before, he said – if you compare the results from the top graph to the results from the bottom graph, there is a little more concurrence than we've seen previously, and I think that's helpful.

On Page XI (of Enclosure F), you list the key uncertainties that significantly affect the results of the modeling effort, in no particular order, said Ruff – can you give us a feel for what the top two or three uncertainties are? Sure, said Marmorek – the relative survival of transported to nontransported fish and the extra mortality assumption are the most important assumptions in general.

In response to a question from Arndt, Marmorek said that some of the hypotheses that are important for spring/summer chinook, and will be included in the weight-of-evidence approach,

will still have a lot of relevance to fall chinook, in particular, some of the extra mortality questions. There are some issues with respect to fall chinook that may be a bit different, Marmorek said, and I don't know if we've discovered all of them yet. However, I think we'll be able to apply the same general structure we've developed for the spring/summer chinook weight-of-evidence process to fall chinook. Will you have to go through a separate, albeit simpler, weight-of-evidence process for fall chinook? Arndt asked. At this point, I think we will, Marmorek replied. It probably won't take as much time as the spring/summer chinook weight-of-evidence exercise, although there are still a number of devils to be discovered in the details of the fall chinook analysis.

Moving on, Marmorek drew the IT's attention to Enclosure G, a memo titled "PATH Preliminary Fall Chinook Results," dated August 4, 1998. We were asked to provide some preliminary fall chinook results to the Drawdown Regional Economic Workgroup, he explained; this is what we gave them. The document contains a brief summary of PATH's preliminary harvest and spawner projections for wild Snake River fall chinook under two hydro actions – A2 (maximized transportation) and A3 (drawdown of the four Lower Snake Projects) – and three possible ocean harvest scenarios (base, conservative and liberal).

Marmorek spent a few minutes going through Enclosure G, emphasizing that these results are still preliminary, and reflect a limited range of model projections and uncertainties. Because PATH has not yet explored a full range of uncertainties, and has not weighted these hypotheses, these preliminary results should be used only as ballpark estimates of Snake River fall chinook spawners and harvest information, he cautioned. The final PATH results for fall chinook will change; we will be returning to the fall chinook analysis in September and October, Marmorek said. Our intent is to provide the best information we can in September and October, to allow the Corps' work to stay on schedule. This will not be the last word on fall chinook, however; PATH will be providing some follow-up analyses toward the end of 1998. In the interim, DREW will be able to plug these preliminary results into their economic and social cost models; as we produce revised results for fall chinook, they will be able to fairly quickly make the necessary adjustments to the socioeconomic performance measures under each of the actions.

Steve Freese, one of the DREW participants who will be using these preliminary results, said that, in the next two weeks, the contractor will be taking these results and generating a document for review.

IV. 1998 Water Management Plan.

Henriksen distributed copies of the final draft Water Management Plan (Enclosure D) and the 1998 Total Dissolved Gas Management Plan (Enclosure E), drawing the IT's attention to one unresolved issue on Page 12 of the 1998 WMP. The issue has to do with the summer interim draft limit at Libby in 1998, she explained; there have been ongoing discussions between the Corps and NMFS with respect to this issue, and ultimately what was decided was to include some of the language from the Corps' Record of Decision with respect to the priority of sturgeon operations at Libby in the spring and operations for salmon during the summer period. NMFS continues to have concerns about the language, she said, so we left the language in the Water Management Plan as a placeholder, marked in grey. There are several other "grey areas" in this draft, some of which contain comments submitted by the Idaho representatives very early in the development of the 1998 Plan. In a number of those comments, the Idaho representatives

request that a volume of water be left in Dworshak on August 31 for release in September and October; we have discussed this topic at several IT and TMT meetings, and those discussions are continuing.

Henriksen continued on through Enclosure D, drawing the IT's attention to the various "grey areas" the document contains. Generally, these issues are pretty much resolved, she said, the summer draft limit at Libby is not an immediate concern in 1998, although it may be an issue in future years.

She added that the 1998 Dissolved Gas Management Plan has been updated to reflect the new spill levels contained in the 1998 supplemental Biological Opinion; beyond that, it contains no major changes. In response to a question from Brown, she spent a few minutes discussing the highlighted section beginning on Page 23 of the Water Management Plan, "Action Agencies' General Criteria for Issue Resolution." This is a new section this year, she said; the idea was to lay out some dispute resolution criteria, in the event that the TMT was unable to reach resolution on a given issue in 1998. The goal wasn't to establish a precedent, she said, but simply to lay out the expectations of the various TMT participants as far as the type of resolution their agency might expect to see in various situations. The Corps, BPA and Reclamation have all sanctioned this section as a tool to look at the possible outcomes of various situations; the salmon managers did not agree with the wording of this section, which is why it has been highlighted, she explained. Jim Nielsen added that the salmon managers do not object to including this section in highlighted form.

Is the recommendation from TMT to consider these documents final, and move on? Brown asked. Yes, Henriksen replied. Any objections? Brown asked. None being heard, the IT adopted the 1998 Water Management Plan and Dissolved Gas Management Plan as written and distributed. Ed Bowles of IDFG noted that, while some of the issues highlighted in the 1998 WMP are still active, given the fact that the in-season management period is almost over, Idaho is willing to sign off on the plan. However, I would note that consensus does not necessarily mean full agreement, he said – it just allows us to move on to planning for 1999. So noted, said Brown.

Ruff added that there are two entities – the State of Montana and the tribes – that probably would not support the 1998 Water Management Plan as written. As most of you are aware, he said, Montana has concerns about the summer draft limits at Libby and Hungry Horse, while the tribes have been recommending reservoir draft and transportation operations that are substantially different from the ones shown in the plan. That's an important clarification, Silverberg said.

Reclamation's Michael Newsom informed the IT that a meeting has been scheduled on August 13 to discuss the results of USBR's Upper Snake River flow augmentation study; he invited anyone with an interest in this issue to attend.

V. Snake River Feasibility Study – Outline for Anadromous Fish Appendix.

Lynne Krasnow of NMFS explained that her purpose today is to provide an overview of the anadromous fish appendix to the Lower Snake River Feasibility Study, why NMFS is writing it and how it links to other parts of the Feasibility Study. She distributed Enclosure H, an IT

discussion draft of the Anadromous Fish Appendix, dated August 6, 1998.

Krasnow explained that the purpose of the A-fish appendix to the Feasibility Study is to clearly describe the effects of each alternative action on listed Snake River stocks. In general, she said, in an EIS feasibility study of this magnitude, the technical information goes in appendices. This appendix will present the scientific data and analysis at the time the feasibility study/EIS is issued concerning the effects and biological consequences of different alternatives for the long-term configuration of the FCRPS. We are pulling in the PATH information as it becomes available, Krasnow added; it will probably be a living document up to the time it goes out for public review in March. In terms of schedule, we have been asked to produce a 70% draft by the end of September, and a 100% draft by the end of December, she said.

Krasnow spent a few minutes going through the contents of Enclosure H; please see this document for details of her presentation. In response to a question from Arndt, Krasnow said NMFS is encouraging the states and tribes to provide their input to this document, through PATH and other processes. We would also like to have a place where we can provide regular updates on the progress of this effort; we're proposing to use the CBFWA meetings as that forum, she said. I guess the question is, is CBFWA an appropriate forum for that type of coordination, and, second, what kind of a schedule and process might CBFWA set up to accommodate it? Brown observed. After a few minutes of discussion, it was agreed that CBFWA would be an appropriate forum for the coordination of this effort with the state fishery agencies and the tribes; Krasnow said her recommendation is that meetings be scheduled every two weeks, probably beginning Monday, August 17. It was so agreed; she asked John Palensky to help her coordinate these meetings with CBFWA.

How will the A-fish appendix be used in the EIS? asked Michael Newsom of Reclamation – will the Corps be drawing its own conclusions in the EIS after reading the appendix, or will you be referring to the appendix? We're required to identify all of the different proposed actions, then to assess the effects of those actions on all of the various resources and users, replied Greg Graham of the Corps. What we're trying to do is say, here are the effects of the proposed actions on anadromous fish. We will summarize the information in the A-fish appendix, and put that into the EIS, Graham explained – that will summarize the effects of the proposed actions on anadromous fish. In other words, the appendix will be a critical piece of the overall decision-making criteria; what we've asked NMFS to do in the appendix is to assess those effects.

So the Corps won't be interpreting NMFS's assessment of those effects, but will simply use them? Newsom asked. The Biological Assessment may include a tradeoff analysis, which will show all of the actions and all of the various effects, Graham said – in order to come to a decision about which action to recommend, you have to be able to look at the tradeoffs between the effects. To do that, you have to identify what criteria you're going to use in the tradeoff analysis; we're developing a decision process specifically for the feasibility study which will identify the criteria, weight them, establish a range of potential outputs for each criteria, all with the goal of ensuring that we make a defensible decision, Graham said. The information in the A-fish appendix will be critical to that tradeoff analysis, he added.

If what Michael is asking is whether the Corps intends is to duplicate a technical analysis of the biological effects of the alternatives, the simple answer is no, said Arndt.

In response to a question from Ron McKown, Brown drew a distinction between the Biological Assessment and the Feasibility Report/EIS. They are not the same documents; the Feasibility Report is a product of the Corps of Engineers, Brown said. The Biological Assessment on a proposed action that is one of those alternatives will be a product of the action agencies collectively. The anadromous fish appendix is intended simply to characterize the effects on anadromous fish of the alternatives described in the EIS, he continued – that's information that will have to be considered in the development of a proposed action, and the Biological Assessment for that proposed action. The degree to which they're in the same document is something that still needs to be fleshed out, Brown said. That was my point, said McKown – we need to figure that out. Agreed, said Brown.

In terms of future actions, said Silverberg, does this issue need to come back to the IT, and if so, when? I think this would be the appropriate forum to bring any substantive issues or questions that arise during the continued development of the appendix, said Brown. With regular updates to be provided through CBFWA? asked Jim Nielsen. Yes, was the reply.

VI. Coordination between Decision Process Coordinating Group and Multi-Species Framework Group.

Brown provided a status report on the recent activities of the Decision Process Coordinating Group. As most of you are aware, this group's main focus has been the development of its decision process paper, which has now been through a series of iterations and has now been distributed, together with a letter from the multispecies framework group of the Three Sovereigns Process. If you'll recall, at one recent IT meeting, we discussed the need to distribute the DPCG's decision process recommendations paper for broader regional review and discussion, Brown said.

In the months since the paper was completed, the DPCG has basically been dormant, Brown said. Some of the participants in the DPCG process have been active in the development of the multispecies framework proposal, which has been reviewed through CBFWA and the Power Planning Council; there has been some discussion of funding that effort. Under the optimistic view, that multispecies effort could provide some information that could contribute to the draft EIS, by April of 1999, said Brown; as it continues to evolve, it could also provide subsequent information for later iterations of the Lower Snake Feasibility Report.

That leaves the question of what the Decision Process Coordinating Group should turn its attention to now, Brown continued. As you'll recall, the DPCG began as basically an ad hoc subcommittee of the IT, to coordinate with PATH. The question I'd like to find an answer for today is, should the DPCG stay dormant or disband, or is there something else we want to ask them to do?

In response to a question from Arndt, Brown said that although the Power Planning Council approved the DPCG's decision process recommendations report for distribution through the Council's public involvement process, that did not happen; the report was sent out as part of an information package regarding the ongoing discussion of the multispecies framework. As far as I know, he said, no comments have been received on the report to date.

After some minutes of discussion, it was agreed that the DPCG should not be disbanded at this

time, but left dormant for now. Brown asked the other IT participants to consider possible future functions of the Decision Process Coordinating Group and bring any suggestions they may have to the September IT meeting. It was agreed that a decision about the future role of the DPCG will be made at that time.

VII. Future Direction of Lower Granite Surface Collection.

Brown said that this issue is not yet ripe for IT discussion; as Bill Hevlin mentioned in his report today, one of the main things the SCT is working on is the priorities for funding in FY'99. The future direction of surface collection at Lower Granite will be a part of that discussion, Brown said. The Corps is working to summarize what was learned from the surface collection tests in 1998, and to lay out some of those possible future directions; just as a heads-up to the IT, we can probably expect that Lower Granite surface collection and John Day extended-length screens are two possible areas that may attract controversy, he said. The next SCT meeting is August 14.

VIII. Approval of Minutes from July 9 IT Meeting.

A few comments were offered on the minutes from the July 9 meeting, notably Mary Lou Soscia's comment that, as a result of a recent court ruling, cows are no longer considered a point-source discharge. These changes agreed to, the minutes were approved.

IX. Next IT Meeting Date and Agenda Items.

The next meeting of the Implementation Team was set for Thursday, September 10, from 9 a.m. to noon in NMFS' Portland offices. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.